

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC SPEAKING FORUM
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024
City Council Chambers, City Hall
45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, CT 06604**

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Nieves called the Public Speaking session of the City Council to order at 6:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk Lydia Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, *Matthew McCarthy*
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack
132nd District: Rolanda Smith
133rd District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron
134th District: Michelle Lyons, *AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia*
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Ortiz
136th District: Frederick Hodges, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: Maria Pereira
139th District: Ernest Newton, Eneida Martinez

A quorum was present. Names shown in italics did not respond when the roll was called.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, MARCH 4TH AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604.

NAME

SUBJECT

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

City Governance – Cognizant Reporting

Mr. Lee came forward and read the following statement into the record:

(mic went out hard to hear) – In recent months I have come before you and called you our disciples of democracy. You’re still elected by votes from some in your district. That can be seen as a positive. But a high percentage of registered voters stayed home last week. Mic went out – Complaints being submitted are being ignored or briefly addressed and not seen through. Bridgeport is becoming the quietest in town, with systemic city problems that present problems. Front page of post, 23 years homeowner lost her house.

How to get to fair and direct justice. Fair housing could address issues. How is the rent increase fair Is it based on budget increases, cost of living increases? Where are the rent commission details available for the public?

Deborah Boles, President
Congregation Rodeph Sholom
2385 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Gaza Resolution.

Ms. Boles came forward and read the following statement into the record:

I represent Rodeph Sholom, which means “pursuit of peace”. For many years we shared our building with the Church of the Apostles and until very recently with a Brazilian Baptist Mission as well. Our interfaith building and community a testament to that pursuit. The losses in Israel and Gaza since the ceasefire was broken on October 7th, are just heartbreaking. The passing of Resolution 20-23 has had the opposite effect of further dividing us. Aside from being outside the City Council's jurisdiction to begin with, this resolution undermines the spirit of common purpose and unity in our city. It amounted to a conscious targeting of our Jewish community and undermined our feeling of safety and security. I ask the city council to rescind the divisive Resolution 20-23 and instead take steps to unite and heal the city.

Deborah Weiss
Board of Trustees,
Rodeph Sholom Synagogue
2625 Park Avenue, Apt. 14-B
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Gaza Resolution.

Weiss came forward and read the following statement into the record:

I'm a property owner who believes the taxpayer dollars should be spent dealing with Bridgeport issues not the international ones outside your purview. At the Jan 2nd council meeting, the Jewish community requested that it be tabled so that our community could provide thoughtful input. This was denied. At this meeting, there was a mob mentality and people were frightened. During the chaos, unethically two rabbis were pulled from the public and taken to a closed room where they were confronted by at least 10 people, including Mayor and city council member Melendez where they were coerced and intimidated into providing input on the resolution. Bridgeport is now being used as an example by other towns of what not to do. We call for rescinding of the resolution. Following the recission council members and religious community members can come together to produce a statement of peace. Bridgeport can become an example of how a community can work together.

Carin Savel
Jewish Federation
4200 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire rescind resolution.

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Ms. Savel came forward and made the following statement into the record:

Good evening I am the CEO of Jewish Federation. I spent more time in the past couple of weeks speaking with council members on the phone. Thank you all for taking the time to meet and talk with me. From the meetings it has become clear there is a lack of information and gross misconception about what the current cease-fire resolution says. 4 jews were randomly plucked from the audience to change the language that was prepared to be passed. The resolution has nothing regarding HAMAS, rapes, kidnapped children. Thank you to the UN, who corrected some of this language. Nor does it call upon us to end the suffering. It does call for the release of hostages without including why or how they became kidnapped. War was now created in Bridgeport between Jews and Muslims. In Bridgeport Jews and Muslims have worked together for decades in peace. This resolution has resulted in Jewish hate and Islam phobia. Bridgeport is the only one to pass this ugly resolution. CT has no appetite for hate. A new resolution for peace was created by Muslims and Jews. We have no appetite for Jewish hate and support the new task force. She urges the council to support this new resolution and task force.

Adele Jacobs
Jacobs & Wallace, PLLC
1087 Broad Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire Resolution.

Jacobs came forward and made the following statement into the record:

Bridgeport business owner for 2 decades, doesn't recognize it anymore. My office has supported several charities and businesses all over. I no longer feel welcome anymore. In 2024 I'm the daughter of 2 holocaust survivors. I never had grandparents, cousins, or uncles. They came with nothing but clothes on their backs. They worked hard, having 5 jobs between both parents. Father was given the honor of the most honored immigrant by the governor, due to his community service. He held out his hand to everyone. He taught his kids to be good people. I don't see that anymore. Calling for an immediate ceasefire calls for excuses that indiscriminate hate and barbaric crimes against Jewish/non-Jewish. Israel has the right and duty that Hamas cannot commit these crimes anymore. Israel is entitled to peace too. The only way for peace is to rid of Hamas, an immediate cease-fire would guarantee more suffering and deaths.

Janette Adams Orengo
486 Anton Street
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Ceasefire Resolution.

Council President Nieves called Ms. Orengo to come forward. There was no response.

Leslie Caraballo
161 Howe Street
Bridgeport, CT 06608

Public Comment/City Concerns.

Caraballo came forward and made the following statement into the record:

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Before identifying herself and listing her address, she asked the council if she could remain anonymous due to concerns about alleged past threats and did not want to list her address. She was advised this was required and complied. Seems foreign to some, but I can't help but remind you, that we are the city of Bridgeport not Bridgeport of America.

If Bridgeport can't tackle its issues of voter suppression, parenting crisis, and school closures due to budget deficits. Or council members who have become verbally or physically abusive to family members or pinning family members against each other. Including picking and choosing who speaks at council meetings and who adheres to the three-minute rule.

It's these issues Bridgeport should address, rather than wasting the people's time hearing them out regarding a crisis, Bridgeport can't do anything about if they can't address their issues. As mentioned above.

I'll conclude with doing the same as you have done to those of us in Bridgeport. By giving you my back, something you're familiar with, and giving you my fill-in-the-blanks to kiss.

Ari Hoffman
Jewish Federation
4200 Park Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire Resolution.

Hoffman Council President Nieves called Ms. Hoffman to come forward. There was no response.

Jasmine Shaham
281 Park Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Ceasefire Resolution.

Ms. Shaham came forward and read the following statement into the record:

With a sign saying "Bombing kids is not self-defense". I stand in chambers today as a Palestinian woman, and also as a human being. Who values human life and rights. We all deserve to live in peace. We're all humans trying to provide a good life. The community and those like me have attended numerous meetings, to help pass a cease-fire resolution. Nothing more nothing less. We are here to promote peace and condemn those taking innocent lives. The photos don't depict what is happening, calling a cease-fire means peace for all. Possible cease-fire, by VP for 6 weeks, this is not enough. We need to stand united and call for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza. Also would like to mention that the beheadings and rapes being portrayed have been debunked by quote-on-quote different sources.

Mohammad Shaham
866 Beechmont Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606

Ceasefire Resolution.

Mr. Shaham came forward and read the following statement into the record:

Good evening. I'm sure you all know who I am, 20-year-old Palestine American. Goes back home every summer. I'm aware of how Occupied – keyword it is. I'm here to discuss mention about how

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beneficial the cease-fire solution is to the genocide happening in Gaza. The benefit solution of Gaza reminds you a cease-fire is a call for peace. Including thousands of women and children. Look at the impact Bridgeport started. Winter passed the same cease-fire, the innocence of ppl. They want to continue killing 2.1 million innocent people. 30 plus thousands of Palestinians have been killed. How many times do I have to show you guys they are human, and you are human. Keep mentioning the raping, beheading all the other propaganda, with no real evidence and proof provided. My Palestinian brothers back home matter, all children all ethnicities matter. Does this resolution make it a bad thing to want to stop the killings? That's all I have say, thank you.

Rasheem Usuff
1234 Kossuth Street
Bridgeport CT

Mr. Usuff came forward and read the following statement into the record:

I ask everyone to respect what I have to say. I am part of A and P group, over 30 thousand Palestinians have been murdered. The world is silent as Haza is getting whipped off the face of the earth. Wake up we are witnessing a 2nd holocaust. But are witnessing Palestine going through the same thing. Here in CT we have add issues. When we dealt with school shootings this was addressed. We did not taper off an entire school, instead, we created an special agent forces to take down the threat in a professional manner. If Israel's problem was with Hamas, they would do the same. Israel created Hamas, I repeat Israel created Hamas because of their oppression of the Palestinian people.. Bridgeport city members gave us hope for a ceasefire, please don't take that away from us. Stand on the right side of history, and stand with justice, from the river of Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea, Palestine will be free whether you guys like it or not.

Robert Zuzu
Downtown Cabaret

Ceasefire Resolution/Public Matter.

Mr. Zuzu came forward and made the following statement into the record:

Thank you, 30 years ago spent over 2 million hours/dollars for the downtown Cabaret Theater. The Theater Supports the Bridgeport rescue mission, among other local charities. I always raised money for the theater, and Jewish friends wrote checks, with no question. We're lucky trying to buy to keep it open forever. M&T Great Bank, verbally agreed to give a \$1.3 million loan, if we can buy the theater it will be with Bridgeport forever. Asked for \$10,000 from a best friend, who when they heard Bridgeport, the donor backed out. This is the effect of what you did here. You're making it hard for me to keep the Theater open. I hope you may reverse what happened. Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Aidee Nieves closed the public session at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Algarin

Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024**

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace

Bridgeport, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER.

Mayor Ganim called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 7:01 p.m.

PRAYER

Mayor Ganim asked Council Member McBride-Lee to lead those present in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Martinez called the roll.

130th District: Scott Burns, *Matthew McCarthy*
131st District: Jorge Cruz, Tyler Mack
132nd District: Rolanda Smith
133rd District: Aikeem Boyd, Jeanette Herron
134th District: Michelle Lyons, *AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia*
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Ortiz
136th District: Frederick Hodges, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Maria Valle
138th District: Maria Pereira
139th District: Ernest Newton, Eneida Martinez

There was a quorum present. Names shown in italics did not respond when the roll was called.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

- **January 2, 2024 & February 5, 2024**

Council Member Burns requested they be voted on separately.

**** THERE WAS A SECOND.**

- **** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2, 2024 MEETING AND THE FEBRUARY 5, 2024 MEETING SEPARATELY PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

January 2, 2024 –

**** COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2, 2024 MEETING.**

Councilwoman Maria submitted the following edits to the minutes:

Twice Amended – Voted on unanimously.

- Page 1- Maria Valle is listed as present but was absent for Public Speaking
- Page 4- Maria Valle is listed as present but was absent for the Regular Meeting Aikeem Boyd is listed as an abstention and Jazmarie Melendez is listed as voting in favor. Neither were present for the vote as they were in the Republican Caucus Room engaged in an illegal and secret meeting with Deputy CAO Tom Gaudette, Attorney Rosnick, Attorney August, two rabbis, several members of the Islamic Community Center redrafting the Ceasefire Resolution. The motion identifies 1/3 in favor with 3 abstentions. Only 1/5 council members were present. Pereira is listed as both voting in favor and abstaining. Pereira abstained as she was not present for the November 6th Regular Council Meeting,
- Page 5 - Motion to appoint Jerome Roberts to the Fair Rent Commission.
- Page 6/7 - Every motion and vote states they passed unanimously, however, it is not noted that Aikeem Boyd and Jazmarie Melendez were absent for all those votes as they were engaged in a secret and illegal meeting in the Republican Caucus Room redrafting the Ceasefire Resolution
- Page 7 - the Ceasefire Resolution was already on the agenda, therefore when Councilwoman Vizzo Panicis made a motion to add the Ceasefire resolution, several of us informed her it was already on the agenda. The motion was not seconded or voted on. The fourth paragraph from the bottom is completely incorrect. I made no comments regarding an email to "the committee" requesting to add a ceasefire resolution to the agenda by 2/3 per the City Charter. Adding an item to a regular meeting agenda requires a 2/3 vote per the FOIA, not the City Charter. Once I was recognized, this is where I read my prepared point of order exactly as written. I did not state the ceasefire resolution was before a "committee" improperly. I stated it was before the City Council improperly.

- Page 8- paragraph 7 is incorrect. I did not raise a point of order after many councilmembers spoke. I raised it as soon as we started discussing the Ceasefire Resolution. This is where I referenced that an illegal and secret meeting was held in the Republican Caucus Room with non-Bridgeport residents and unelected or appointed members of the public where we were handed a scribbled fourth draft of the ceasefire resolution just minutes before we started debating the agenda items. I further stated voting on any international policy, conflicts and war was not within the City Council's authority as the CT Legislature grants municipal legislative powers and this was not within those powers and that international policy is strictly within the powers of Congress and the President of the U.S. Paragraph 8 - I did not raise a point of order here. I never made a motion to table. I requested a ruling on whether the ceasefire resolution was properly before the City Council. The mayor ruled that it was properly before the City Council. This should be moved to Page 7 below my statement and point of order once we start the debate on the ceasefire resolution.
- Jeanette Herron Statement made after Dasha's Spell on Ceasefire resolution:

I think when we get on this council that we all represent the community: the whole city whoever lives here, wherever they come from. And as Councilwoman Dasha Spell, said we are a sanctuary city. We are a welcoming city which is the same thing as a sanctuary city many of us voted on this many years ago. We here know that we don't have any say in the federal government this is just to say we support you and the Israeli community because no one deserves to die and you've heard me for years now say if we have a homicide in Bridgeport I say "no one deserves to die no matter who they are or what they've done". Life is very precious and we all know that Many of you have lost people in Gaza and Many Israelis have lost their families as well. This is not taken a side this is showing that were united with everybody to do what's necessary, And Jasmarié, I give you a lot of credit for coming on this council on your first day trying to do something to make change in this city.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2, 2024, MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2, 2024 MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE seconded.**

****** THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 2, 2024 MADE BY COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER MCBRIDE-LEE seconded.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BURNS AND COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS abstained.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 2, 2024, MEETING AS SUBMITTED WITH THE ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- **February 5, 2024**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 5, 2024, MEETING AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 5, 2024 MEETING.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ seconded.**

****COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD abstained.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON read her amendments into the record.**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

****COMMUNICATIONS AND REFERRALS WERE MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER ORTIZ seconded.**

47-23 Communication from Tax Collector re: Proposed Assignment of Tax Liens for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, referred to Contracts Committee.

48-23 Communication from Mayor re: Proposed Five-Year Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2029, referred to Budget and Appropriations Committee.

49-23 Communication from Housing & Community Development re: Proposed Program Year 50 Annual Action Plan: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); Homeless Emergency Solutions Grant (HESG); HOME Investment Partnership and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), referred to Special Committee on CDBG Program.

50-23 Communication from City Attorney re: Proposed Amendment to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.36 – Officers’ Salaries, amend Section 2.36.010 – Officers’ and Unaffiliated Employee Salaries for the purposes of moving the Full-time City Attorney Position from the subsection *Executive Appointed Officials* at grade 8 to the subsection *Chief Appointed Officials* at grade 9a, referred to Ordinance Committee.

Mayor Ganim asked if there was any Council Member who would like to remove this item from the Consent Calendar.

Council Member requested that Agenda Items 10-23, 28-23, and 44-23 be removed from the Consent Calendar.

The City Clerk read the remaining Consent Calendar items into the record.

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

***10-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Jonathan Johnson – Docket No. FBT-CV-21-6111245-S.

***MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER MACK seconded.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA opposed.**

***18-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Kiana Gallimore – Docket No. FBT-CV-21-6111992-S.

***MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO seconded.**

***28-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Megha Jain – Docket No. 3:22-cv-00874 (VDO).

***MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER MACK seconded.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA opposed.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON abstained.**

***43-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of State Farm Mutual Insurance Company a/s/o Alpa Mamidanna – Docket No. FBT-CV24-6130747-S.

***MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER CASTILLO seconded.**

***44-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Settlement of Pending Litigation in the Matter of Michael Lauro v. City of Bridgeport, et al – Docket No. FBT-CV19-6091138-S.

***MOVED BY COUNCIL MEMBER BOYD.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER MACK seconded.**
****COUNCIL MEMBER PEREIRA opposed.**

ROLL CALL VOTE ITEMS:

***26-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of John Stevens (U) to the Harbor Commission.

** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (CRUZ, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, CASTILLO, NIEVES, MELENDEZ, NEWTON AND MARTINEZ, BURN, MACK HODGES, PEREIRA, SMITH, AND VALLE) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).

***33-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Jennifer Rocha (D) to the Commission for People with Disabilities.

** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (CRUZ, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, CASTILLO, NIEVES, MELENDEZ, NEWTON AND MARTINEZ, BURN, MACK HODGES, PEREIRA, SMITH, AND VALLE) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).

***34-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Linda Lubin (D) to the Commission for People with Disabilities.

** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (CRUZ, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, CASTILLO, NIEVES, MELENDEZ, NEWTON AND MARTINEZ, BURNS, MACK HODGES, PEREIRA, SMITH, AND VALLE) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).

***35-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Ali Akbar (U) to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FOURTEEN (14) IN FAVOR (CRUZ, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, CASTILLO, NIEVES, MELENDEZ, MACK, HODGES, NEWTON, SMITH, VALLE, AND MARTINEZ) AND TWO (2) OPPOSED (BURNS, PEREIRA).

***36-23** Miscellaneous Matters Committee Report re: Appointment of Ada Gloria Hernandez (D) to the Fair Rent Commission.

** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIFTEEN (15) IN FAVOR (CRUZ, BOYD, HERRON, LYONS, MCBRIDE-LEE, ORTIZ, CASTILLO, NIEVES, MELENDEZ, NEWTON AND MARTINEZ, BURNS, MACK HODGES, PEREIRA, SMITH, AND VALLE) AND ONE (1) OPPOSED (PEREIRA).

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Algarin
Telesco Secretarial Services

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